

Holy Cow, De-stressing Is So Simple

Discourse: Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

I was a student of a village madrassa in Uttar Pradesh in the 1930s. We studied a poem by the renowned poet Ismail Meerathi in the Urdu reader. It was titled 'Hamari Gaay' – Our Cow. One of the verses went like this: "Kaljoghas chari thi ban mein,/ Doodh bani woh gaay ke than mein."

It means that the cow is a special kind of animal. It takes (eats) grass and in return gives us milk. In other words, the cow is divine: it is able to convert non-milk into milk.

This poem became a part of my memory. It taught me a great lesson. God, the Creator, has made the cow a model for human behaviour in that it gives us a lesson in high morality. We must develop this quality of conversion in our personality, and this should enable us to transform negative thought into positive thought.

It is said that man is a social animal. But what is society? Society is full of differences. Every day we experience provocative situations; every day we face the disagreeable behaviour of others and every day we suffer anger and tension because of conflicts arising out of differences.

Then what should we do? The cow could show us the answer. God has created a model in the form of the cow. We have to adopt cow culture, we have to develop in our personality what may be called the capacity for transformation; we have to turn negative experiences into positive thinking.

The fact is that everyone enjoys freedom. But everyone also has the choice to misuse freedom. It is this misuse of freedom that creates problems.

Hence we need to learn the art of problem management.

According to Islam, the present world is a testing ground. Every man and woman here is being tested. If we have freedom, it is because without freedom, there can be no test. This freedom is God-given, and as such, no one has the licence to abolish it. We have no option but to follow the cow pattern, that is, to turn negativity into positivity.

Once a man came to the Prophet of Islam, and said: "O Prophet, give me a piece of advice by which I may be able to manage all the affairs of my life." The Prophet replied: "Don't be angry."

"Don't be angry" means learning the art of anger management, learning the art of converting anger into forgiveness, of converting anger into peaceability. This is the highest

form of spirituality.

Leaving society and going into the jungle or the mountains is a lower form of spirituality. The higher form is that which the cow demonstrates. We live with people, experience all kinds of behaviour, but try not to react negatively. You have to imitate the cow. Just as the cow converts grass into milk, you have to convert negative thought into positive thought. This is the highest form of spirituality.

Most are battling stress daily. They ask about ways to de-stress. I would suggest that they learn a lesson from the cow. They should adopt the cow habit in their affairs and they will be able to de-stress quite successfully. The cow represents an elevated form of lifestyle. Adopt this lifestyle, and you will be able to enjoy a tension-free life.

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